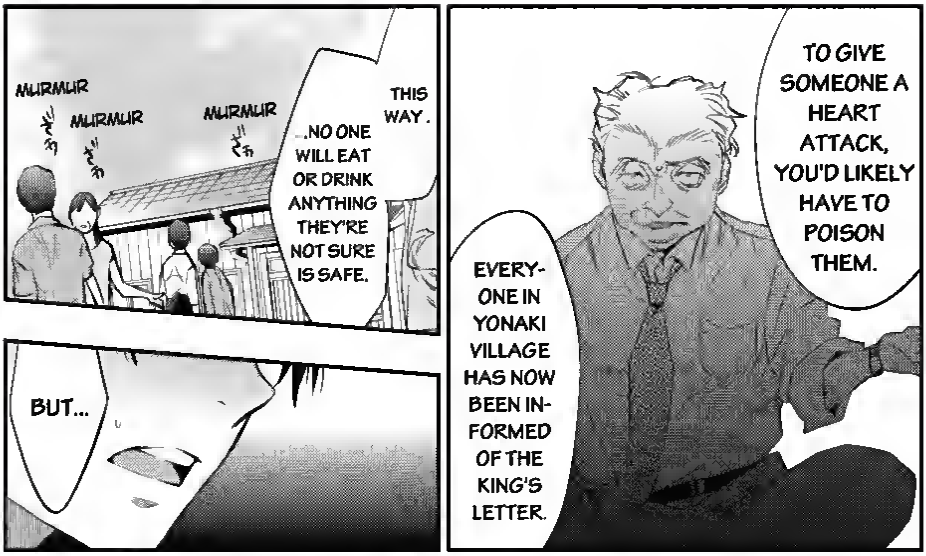
YOU THINK KAZUNARI AND RYUUJI ARE OKAY IN THERE?
CHAPTER 5
KING'S GAME ORIGIN
.....
IF THE POLICE ARE HERE... THEN THIS MUST BE SERIOUS...
MURMUR
STORY BY NOBUAKI KANAZAWA
ART BY J-TA YAMADA

MURMUR
MURMUR
MURMUR
MURMUR
MURMUR
MURMUR
THEN SOME-ONE ELSE MIGHT BE KILLED?
I'M SO SCARED DARLING!
DON'T FRET, THE POLICE ARE HEAR-NOW
MUR-DER?
IF IT IS
...THE MUR-DERER MIGHT STILL BE NEARBY!
I WONDER WHY HE ONLY WANTS TO TALK TO THE TWO OF THEM.
COME ON, NATSUKO.
YOU REALLY CAN'T FIGURE THAT OUT?

WE INVESTIGATED EVERYONE'S HOME ONE BY ONE...
...AND FOUND IT IN THE MARUOKA'S MAILBOX
THE THIRD LETTER...
...FROM THE KING!
THE REAL LETTER'S BEEN SENT TO FORENSICS FOR EXAMINATION. THESE ARE JUST COPIES.

PEEK
"THE PENALTY FOR DISOBEDIENCE..."
"ORDER 3."
"LIGHT A LARGE BONFIRE IN FRONT OF THE TOWN HALL AND BURN 100,000 YEN IN CASH."
SHFF
AS IF THAT'S POSSIBLE
"...IS A HEART ATTACK."
THERE YOU HAVE IT, THIS TIME IT'S A HEART ATTACK.


MURMUR
MURMUR
MURMUR
THIS WAY.
..NO ONE WILL EAT OR DRINK ANYTHING THEY'RE NOT SURE IS SAFE.
BUT...
TO GIVE SOMEONE A HEART ATTACK, YOU'D LIKELY HAVE TO POISON THEM.
EVERY-ONE IN YONAKI VILLAGE HAS NOW BEEN IN-FORMED OF THE KING'S LETTER.

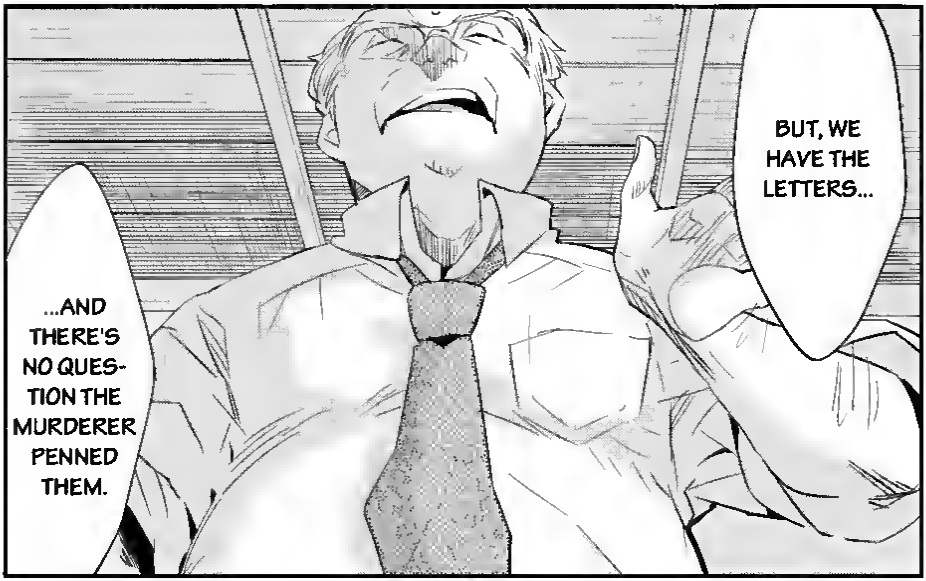
WHO DO THEY THINK THE KING IS?
HRM-M...
WHAT DO THE POLICE THINK ABOUT ALL THIS?
WHAT DO YOU MAKE OF THAT?
THE KING'S ALREADY KILLED FIVE PEOPLE EX-ACTLY HOW HIS LET-TERS DE-SCRIBED.

KAZU-NARI-KUN...
DO YOU THINK THAT UMEDA SUZUYO AND KANDA DAIKI'S SUI-CIDES...
...WERE THE WORK OF THE KING?
YES...
I DO.
ME, TOO!

I'VE GONE OVER IT A MILLION TIMES AND I JUST CAN'T SEE WHY THEY'D KILL THEM-SELVES
THEY WERE THE ONLY KIDS BE-TWEEN 10 AND 20 WHO DIDN'T TOUCH THE CORPSE
IT'S TRUE THAT THEIR WIN-DOWS WERE OPEN
IT'S POS-SIBLE THAT SOMEONE SNUCK IN, KILLED THEM, AND STAGED THE SCENE LOOK LIKE A SUICIDE
DOU-JIMA-SAN..
IS THE CULPRIT...
EVEN A HUMAN BEING?

I SAW SACHIKO-SAN'S BOOY.
SHE WAS CHOPPED UP SO HORRIBLY, DOWN TO HER BONES...SHE DIDN'T EVEN LOOK HUMAN.
HE CAN PASS UN-SEEN.
HE KNOWS THINGS ONLY THE PEOPLE INVOLVED SHOULD KNOW
HE KILLS IN WAYS THAT DEFY RE-ALITY.
IS THAT...
THE KING!
SLIENCE
IS THAT SOMETHING A HUMAN'S EVEN CA-PABLE OF?

THE REAL ISSUE IS TIME, AND WHETHER HE HAD ENOUGH TO DO THAT TO THREE PEOPLE IN THE SPAN OF A SINGLE NIGHT.
WE'RE STILL ANALYZING THE EVIDENCE... BUT I DON'T THINK IT'S IMPOSSIBLE.
ERR...
SCRATCH
SCRATCH
GLANCE
THE IMPLICATION BEING THAT WE MAY HAVE MORE THAN ONE PERPETRATOR ON OUR HANDS.


BUT, WE HAVE THE LETTERS...
...AND THERE'S NO QUESTION THE MURDERER PENNED THEM.

SO AT THE VERY LEAST THERE IS A HUMAN INVOLVED. YES.
THE PENCIL STROKES ARE SHAKY AND HAPHAZARD SO AS TO THWART ANY HANDWRITING ANALYSIS.
DEMONS OR GHOSTS WOULDN'T BOTHER WITH THAT. WOULD THEY?

.....
I AGREE IT'S A PERPLEXING CASE.
THIS IS A VERY SMALL VILLAGE.
...WHERE OUTSIDERS WOULD STICK OUT LIKE A SORE THUMB.
はっ GASP

YOU'RE SAYING THE MURDERER IS ONE OF THE VILLAGERS?!
THEN...
...OR THE KING IS ONE OF US.
JUST LIKE MICHIKO SAID.
THE MOUNTAINS. .
AND IF HE IS, THEN EVERYONE IS IN DANGER.
HE'S CLEARLY TARGETING YONAKI VILLAGE.
IT'S POSSIBLE THAT THE KILLER IS AN OUTSIDER WHO RETREATS TO THE MOUNTAINS BETWEEN CRIMES.
NO NO, THAT'S FAR FROM CERTAIN AT THIS POINT.

IF WE ALL DO WHAT THE LETTER SAYS, WE SHOULD BE BE FINE...
BUT WE FOLLOWED THE KING'S ORDERS AND HE DIDN'T KILL US.
MURMUR
MURMUR
MURMUR
MURMUR
TH-THANK YOU VERY MUCH!
MY MEN AND I WILL HELP HOWEVER WE CAN.
AT THIS STAGE I THINK FOLLOWING THE ORDER IS SAFEST
NO ARGUMENT HERE.
GLANCE
HONESTLY, I'D RATHER EVACUATE EVERYONE TO OUTSIDE THE VILLAGE TIL WE SOLVE THE CRIMES, BUT...
OUR TOP PRIORITY IS TO PREVENT ANY MORE DEATHS.

THERE'RE TOO MANY PEOPLE WHO WORK THE FIELDS
ONE OR TWO NIGHTS IS BAD ENOUGH, LET ALONE AN UNKNOWN LENGTH OF TIME
WE CAN'T JUST UP AND LEAVE AT A MOMENT'S NOTICE
AND... THAT'S THAT.
BUT HAVE NO FEAR, WE WON'T BE GOING ANYWHERE UNTIL WE CATCH THE KILLER
WE'LL KEEP OUR EYES PEELED!
HA HA HA
NO ONE ELSE WILL DIE. NOT ON MY WATCH.

KAZU-
NARI!
YUUJI!
THE POLICE QUES-TIONED YOU, RIGHT?
ARE YOU OKAY?
YEAH, THEY WERE ASKING ABOUT THE KING'S LET-TERS.
AND WE WERE THE ONES WHO FOUND 'EM, SO...

WEDNESDAY
AUGUST 10,
9:15 A.M.

TURN
THAT WHAT?
I SURE HOPE SO...
MICHIKO'S GOT IT IN HER HEAD THAT--
AHH...
YEAH, LET'S TAKE A WALK.

I CAN'T HELP BUT WONDER...
...IF THE POLICE SUSPECT YOU TWO.
WELL, WHAT IS IT?
SO...

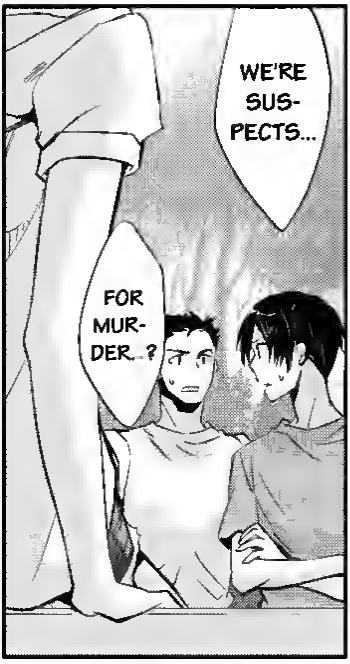
WHY WOULD THEY SUSPECT ME AND KAZU-NARI?
WE JUST FOUND THE DAMN LET-TERS!
W-WE'RE SUS-PECTS?!
TO BE THE KING?!
THAT'S WHAT'S SUSPI-CIOUS.
DID YOU REALLY FIND THEM?
OR JUST PRENTEND YOU DID?
.....

MICHIKO, DON'T TELL ME...
YOU DOUBT US TOO?

MICHI-KO...
WELL...

I'M 90 PERCENT SURE NEITHER OF YOU IS THE KING.
YOU CAN NEVER COMPLETELY TRUST ANYONE, AFTER ALL.
90 PERCENT IS HUGE! YOU SHOULD BE RELIEVED.
THEN YOU'RE 10 PERCENT SUSPICIOUS?
90 PERCENT...
ANYWAY, IT'S A FACT THAT THE POLICE SUSPECT YOU.

AAH!


WE'RE SUS-PECTS...
FOR MUR-DER...?

THE LET-TERS.
KAZU-NARI?

THEY WANTED TO GET OUR FINGERPRINTS.
THAT'S WHY THEY MADE TWO!

THE COPIES OF THE KING'S THIRD MES-SAGE!
WHAT ABOUT 'EM?

HE MAY HAVE BEEN FLASHING A NICE, FRIENDLY SMILE...
BUT IN HIS MIND, HE DOESN'T TRUST US!

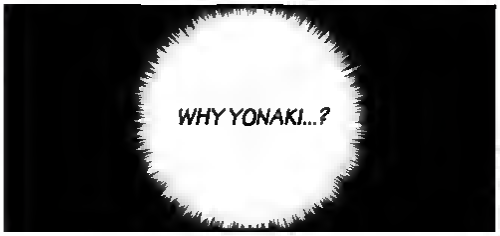
SEE?
WHAT'D I TELL YOU?

YOU'RE SUPECTS...
...IN A SERIAL MURDER CASE
GLARE

THAT'S RIDICU-LOUS!
I'M NOT THE KING...
...AND NEI-THER IS YUUJI!
HM.
THEN WHO IS THE KING, DO YOU THINK?
.....!

I CAN'T IMAGINE ANYONE I KNOW DOING SOMETHING SO HORRIFIC.
NO, I'M SURE OF IT.
I DON'T THINK IT'S SOMEONE FROM THE VILLAGE.
WE'VE ALL LIVED TOGETHER IN THIS VILLAGE FOR YEARS.
I CAN'T EVEN CONSIDER IT.
KAZUNARI...
.....

UMM...
YEAH, WHY OUR VILLAGE?

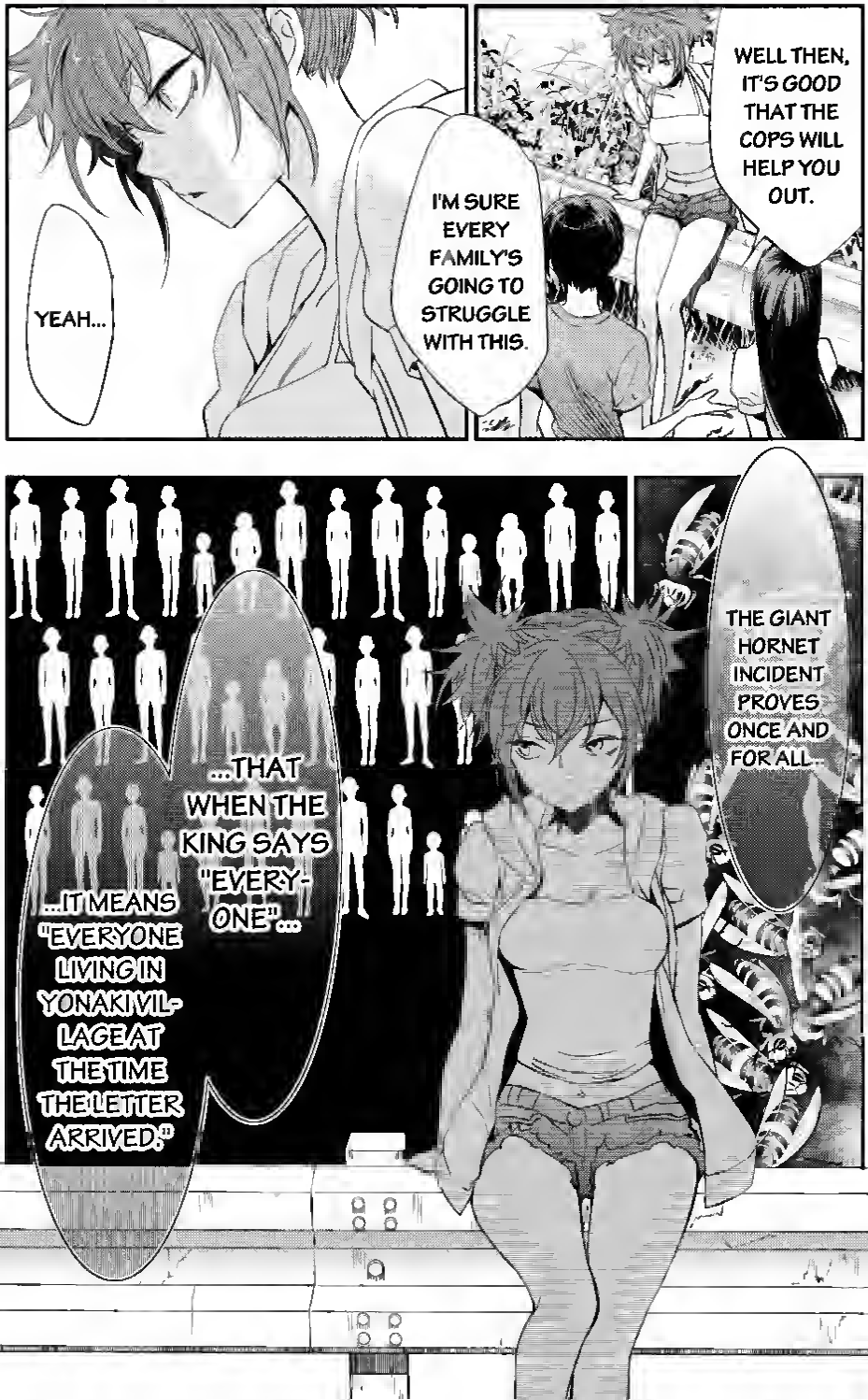

WHY YONAKI...?

FINDING THE KING IS UP TO THE POLICE NOW.

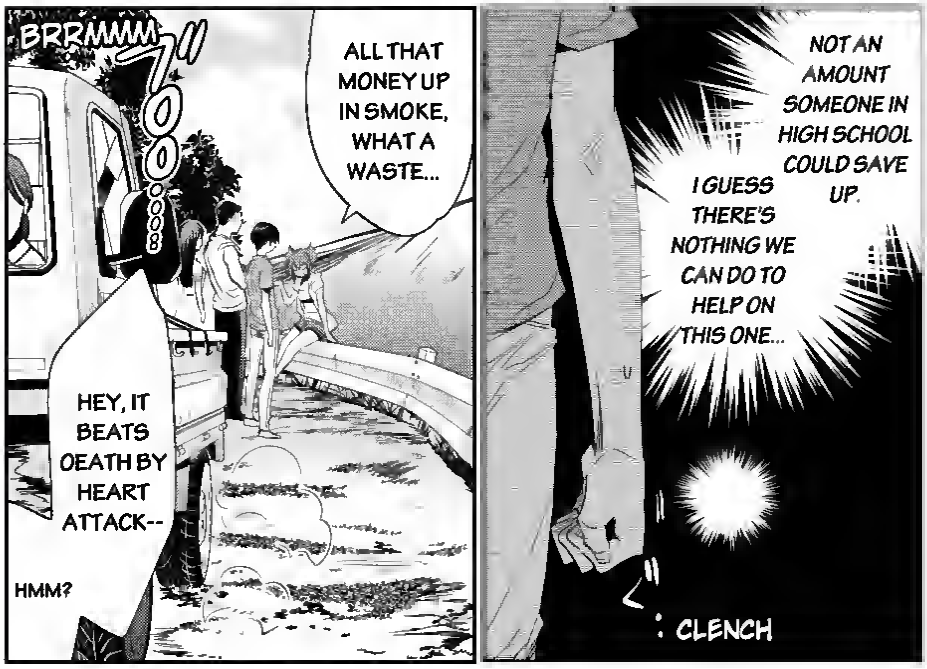
MORE IMPORTANT IS FOLLOWING THE NEW ORDER.

IF HE JUST WANTS TO KILL RANDOM PEOPLE HE WOULDN'T NEED TO BOTHER WITH ALL THE THEATRICS, PLUS THERE ARE PLENTY OF PLACES WHERE IT'D BE EASIER!
IF IT IS AN OUTSIDER, WHY'S HE SO OBSESSED WITH YONAKI?!

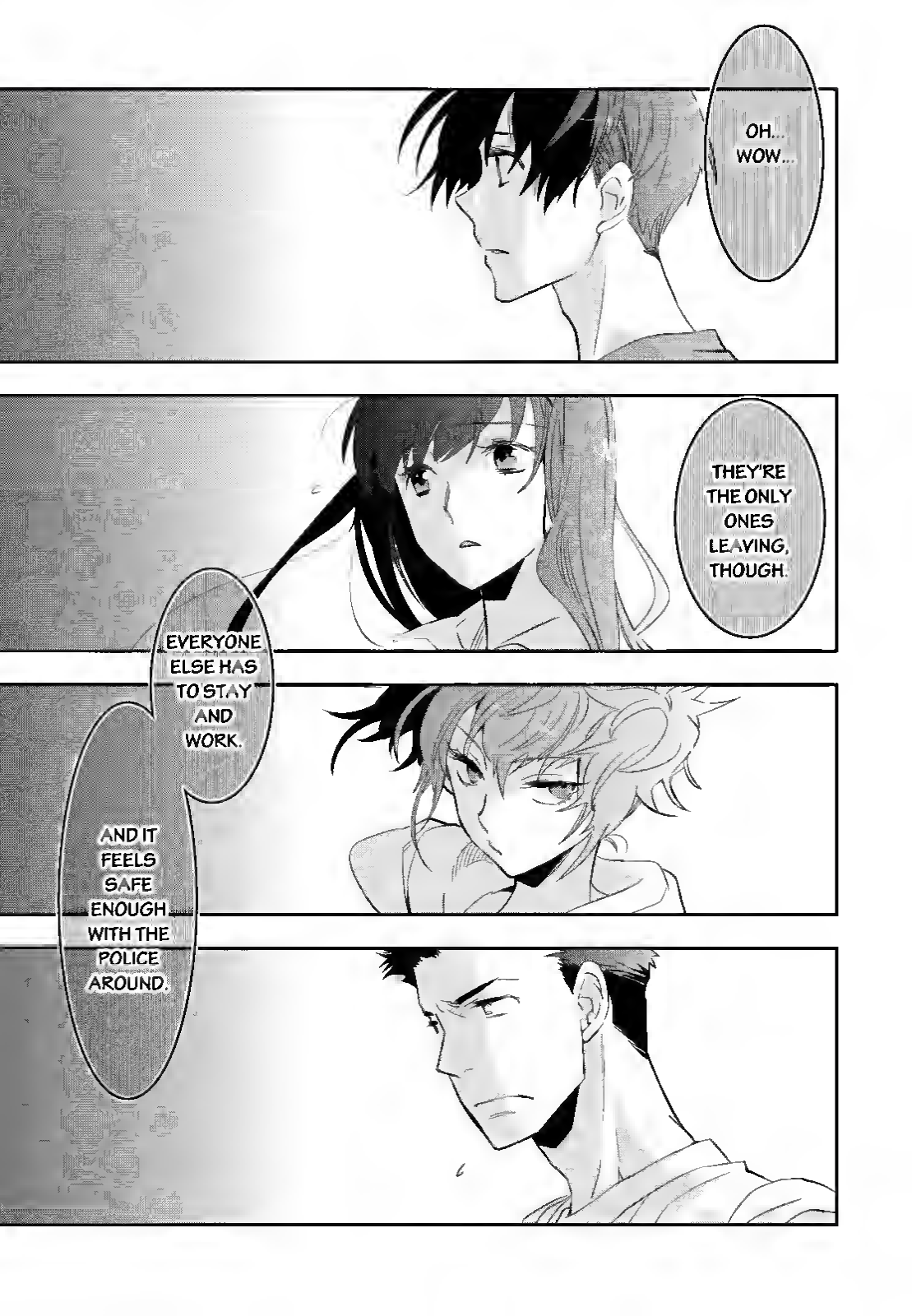
*PAWN SHOP
質
ゴエヤチ
YUP. THE POLICE TOLD US WHILE WE WAITED FOR YOU.
MY MOTHER SAID SHE WAS GOING INTO THE CITY TO GET MONEY FROM THE BANK.
PROBABLY MOST OTHER ADULTS WILL, TOO.
蔵出銀行
THIS TIME IT'S "BURN A HUNDRED GRAND."
YOU'RE RIGHT...
WE'RE GONNA HAVE TO BORROW FROM THE COPS.
AFTER MY MOM DIED, MY USELESS DAD WASTES ALL HIS MONEY ON BEER AND GAMBLING.
WE DON'T HAVE SQUAT IN SAVINGS.
I SEE...


YEAH...
I'M SURE EVERY FAMILY'S GOING TO STRUGGLE WITH THIS.
WELL THEN, IT'S GOOD THAT THE COPS WILL HELP YOU OUT.
...IT MEANS "EVERYONE LIVING IN YONAKI VILLAGE AT THE TIME THE LETTER ARRIVED."
...THAT WHEN THE KING SAYS "EVERYONE"...
THE GIANT HORNET INCIDENT PROVES ONCE AND FOR ALL--

IT'S A LOT OF MONEY.
YEAH.
YOU, YOUR OAO, AND YOUR GRANDMA IS 300,000.
MY SISTER AND GRANDPA, ANOTHER 300,000.
AND YUUJI...
EVEN IF WE ARE PAYING TO SAVE OUR LIVES...
A HUNDRED THOUSAND YEN PER VILLAGER...


BRRMMM
ALL THAT MONEY UP IN SMOKE, WHAT A WASTE...
HEY, IT BEATS OEATH BY HEART ATTACK--
HMM?
NOT AN AMOUNT SOMEONE IN HIGH SCHOOL COULD SAVE UP.
I GUESS THERE'S NOTHING WE CAN DO TO HELP ON THIS ONE...
CLENCH

BATUNK
ゴトン
BATUNK
ゴトン
ARE HE AND HIS WIFE GOING TO GET THE MONEY?
BRRMMM
ブロロロ...
THAT'S YUUICHI-SAN'S TRUCK.
NO...THEY'RE LEAVING THE VILLAGE.
MICHIYO-SAN'S TERRIFIED
THEY'RE GOING TO STAY WITH SOME RELATIVES FOR A WHILE
HE'S TAKING TIME OFF FROM HIS FORESTRY JOB TOO


OH... WOW...
THEY'RE THE ONLY ONES LEAVING, THOUGH.
EVERYONE ELSE HAS TO STAY AND WORK.
AND IT FEELS SAFE ENOUGH WITH THE POLICE AROUND.

I BET A LOT OF PEOPLE WISH THEY COULD LEAVE, THOUGH.
I HOPE...
...THINGS GO BACK TO NORMAL SOON.
I GREW UP WITH THESE PEOPLE.
THEY'RE ALL LIKE FAMILY TO ME.
WE ALWAYS SAY HELLO WHEN WE SEE ONE ANOTHER...
SURE, A LOT OF PEOPLE HAVE BEEN DIFFICULT ABOUT ME AND NATSUKO...
BUT I LOVE ALL OF THEM ANYWAY.

THAT'D BE
NICE...